

WASHINGTON – A report released today by Sen. Chuck Grassley and Rep. Darrell Issa concludes that the Amtrak board removed the agency inspector general without prior notice to Congress, as required, and despite the inspector general's effective track record of "exposing waste, fraud, and abuse at the highest levels within Amtrak."

"Amtrak failed to comply with the Inspector General Act for way too long," Grassley said. "Forcing its Inspector General out of office without notice or consultation with Congress is only the latest example. Naming an interim inspector general from Amtrak management with no relevant experience only added insult to injury. All of this undermined the independence of the Office of Inspector General. Like any entity that receives billions of tax dollars, Amtrak needs independent oversight, and I hope this controversy has helped Amtrak learn that valuable lesson."

"Amtrak interfered with and ultimately decided to get rid of its Inspector General for the worst possible reason: to stop an investigation," Issa said. "Inspectors General can't be effective if they believe looking for waste and abuse could cost them their job. It's clear Amtrak has problems that could ultimately require action by Congress."

Grassley, ranking member of the Committee on Finance, and Issa, ranking member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, released a minority staff report on the removal of Fred Weiderhold as Amtrak's inspector general.

The report concluded that Weiderhold was removed by the Amtrak board without prior notice to Congress and contrary to the Inspector General Act, which specifically states that Amtrak is required by law to give 30 days' notice to Congress before removing its inspector general and the reasons for doing so. The report found no evidence that the Amtrak board made any effort to engage in any meaningful prior consultation with Congress.

The prior notice requirement is meant to protect the independence of inspectors general, whose relationship with agency management is necessarily adversarial at times. However, Weiderhold's removal was accomplished through an ultimatum, giving him 24 hours to retire or be publicly subjected to unspecified allegations of "cause," according to the report. He had no time to obtain counsel and no opportunity to hear the reasons that the board would publicly cite in a letter giving notice to Congress if he refused, the report found.

The report said Weiderhold's removal occurred around the same time that unfounded accusations were being aired in the course of President Obama's removal of Gerald Walpin as inspector general at the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The report makes a series of recommendations, including that Amtrak, and any other agency contemplating removing or forcing the resignation of an inspector general, should fully inform and consult with Congress before taking action; that Amtrak should discontinue its policy of providing indemnification for employees, contractors, and all other entities in conjunction with an administrative investigation by the Amtrak OIG, a practice that is unheard of in the rest of the inspector general community and is a waste of Amtrak resources; and that Amtrak should establish a policy that sets limits on its use and expenditures on outside counsel.

[September 13, 2010 - The Removal of the Inspector General for The National Railroad Passenger Corporation \(Amtrak\)](#)

[Exhibits 1-7](#)

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